

## RALPH R. SHAW: THE HAWAIIAN YEARS

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In the year since his death, many tributes to Ralph Shaw have appeared in library publications. In them, however, there has been very little said about his years in Hawaii. It seems appropriate, therefore, that there be in our library journal a recognition and a short account of his professional activities during the years he spent here.

Although tragically short, in my mind they were wonderfully appropriate final years. Few men in the last years of a career have an opportunity to draw on every area of their experiences and abilities in accomplishing their goals. As Dean of Library Activities at the University of Hawaii he had an opportunity to create the kind of library school he envisioned -- not only developing the curriculum, but appointing the opening faculty. In doing this, he was able to draw on his experiences as former Dean and Professor of the Graduate Library School of Rutgers University. The Library School he started here in Hawaii had many of the characteristics of the Rutgers School together with the addition of some of his own innovations. From this base the School, of course, has continued to develop many innovative programs.

His position as Dean enabled him to institute in the University of Hawaii Library some of his ideas of administration and management which had evolved through his years of experience and were later presented in the courses in Management and Administration which he developed at Rutgers and carried on in the new Library School here.

A new department of reprography in the Library incorporated his advanced ideas on the place of photography and other copying methods in libraries which had evolved from at least as early as his days as Librarian of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The methods of library budgeting and cost analysis; the use of Library of Congress proof slips for the simultaneous selection and ordering of books and the preparation of catalog copy, which he introduced in the Library

could only have been developed by a man with complete familiarity with the routines of selecting and ordering books and the capabilities of photography in library operations. These methods, which I am sure he took pleasure in developing, could only have been practical in a situation where selection and ordering were carried out on a scale as large as he was able to support in the University of Hawaii at that time. In the years between 1964 when he became Dean of Library Activities until 1968 when he withdrew from the Library operations, the rate of acquisition increased from 20,260 volumes per year to 95,843.

And unbelievably, this man who had made a reputation as an efficiency expert threw out the newly installed IBM circulation record system, and designed his own manually operated one which five years later was still so economical that computer salesmen could not use cost savings as an argument for installation of an automated record system.

No area of library operation was spared. Out went the Kardex file for checking in periodicals to be replaced by 3 x 5 cards and cardboard boxes. It is not difficult to imagine the effect on the staff of some of these actions. Shaw did what he felt needed to be done.

Yet his concern for the staff was very real. Probably only someone who has had experience in working with Federal and State civil service agencies can truly appreciate the enormous amount of skill and patience which were required, to extricate the University's professional librarians from the civil service and to establish the new series of library technicians in the civil service system. And only slightly less skill was required to gain acceptance, as a class, of these newly liberated librarians as members of the University faculty -- a process which is usually years in accomplishment.

I am convinced that only someone with Shaw's experience in working with civil service agencies would have had the knowledge required to accomplish what he did in such a relatively short time. His years in Washington and as Librarian in Gary, Indiana, served him well in this case. It is doubtful if a man with only an academic background could have done it.

Conversely, however, only someone with Shaw's energy and immediate academic background could have guided the creation of the new Graduate School of library Studies to accreditation in three years. The Library School was close to his heart. In spite of the demands on his time and energy made by the Library, he found time to search for and to assemble in Honolulu during the first years of the new School a faculty which was truly remarkable by any standards.

This short article is not the place to recount Shaw's activities in the American Library Association. His many years of service on committees and in various offices culminated in his election as President in 1956. I am sure that he was keenly interested in ALA and in its role in the world of librarianship. I also suspect, however, that some of his greatest frustrations resulted from his not being able to accomplish with this colossus the kinds of things he was able to do with less unwieldy bodies.

Meanwhile what of the man who accomplished all these things? Were his chief interests in administration, in education, in publishing? When he knew that because of his health he would have to start saving his strength, he gave up first the administration of the University Library, then a year later his teaching in the Library School, then next the Scarecrow Press (although he never lost interest in it) and then almost literally until his death he continued his work on the translation of Muther's German Book Illustration of the Goethe Period and the Early Renaissance. Is it significant that one of his earlier works, Schneider's Theory and History of Bibliography, published in 1934 in the field of bibliography, and his last, the Muther volume were both translations of the works of German scholars and in subject content far from the field of management with which he seems to have been associated for most of his professional life? There is no doubt that making available in English foreign works having to do with, librarianship was very important to him. One of the last projects he discussed with me was a program for the translation of books from foreign languages into English by a group of graduate students under the direction of experts. There is such a large body of library literature in foreign languages and the idea is so good that maybe some day someone will carry it out.

This was just one of his dreams. It may turn out that in spite of all of his accomplishments, the ideas of things needing to be done and ways of accomplishing them, that he left us in his writings and in his correspondence, will be his greatest legacy to his profession.



RALPH R. SHAW 1907-1972